**Lent 4. Cycle. B. 2024.**

**There is a heart breaking, inspiring story of a lovely mother who converted, changed and transformed her prodigal teen-age Son by her sheer tears of love.** Her sons’ name was Vinod. Literally the very meaning of **his name is “joy”.** He was the joy of the family for many years. But when he became a teenager the source of the joy of his life was turned to evil of all kinds. One day he was so angry and infuriated that he spat at his mother, scattering on the floor the food his mother had served him. He was mad at his mother, who once again had disapproved of his reckless gambling habit. It was not from feminine weakness that **Mrs. Sen, Vinod’s’ mother,** wept for the rest of the day. That night, she crept into Vinod’s room while he lay prone on his bed. The son sensed her presence but didn’t move. Neither spoke.

The mother lovingly placed her hand on her sons’ head, slide it gently down his sleek, wavy hair, and rested it warmly on his cheek. Vinod still lay motionless. Then, bending down and lifting his head with both the hands, she kissed him on both the cheeks. Love for his mother flowed profusely into the hardened, stubborn heart of Vinod. A warm sensation swept over him. His mothers’ hot tears melted him. At first, Vinod felt ill at ease, uncomfortable, awkward and repentant. But the **warmth of maternal love mellowed him**. His eyes became springs of tears mingled with hers and in that great stream everything was washed away and purified. Getting up quickly, he knelt and embraced his mother.

**This is a kind of homely paraphrase of Todays’ Second Reading (Ephesians) where St. Paul Says,** God is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which He has loved us, even when we were dead through our sins, made us alive together with Christ. Vinod, was “dead” a son. But his mother, who loved him with a great love, could not leave him in that state. She graciously unsolicited, bent down, stooped low to the miserable state of her son and made him alive once again as son, infusing into him her tender, warm maternal love which he justly did not deserve.

**This is exactly what God did when He sent His Son to the world. God so loved the world that he gave His only Son (Todays’ Gospel)**. This is one of the most well-known beloved verses of scripture. The Son stooped down to our sinful state and elevated us to be God’s children, infusing into us His own Spirit, the Spirit of love. Vinod was saved by the sheer grace, the free gift of his mothers’ love. We too are saved by the sheer grace of God, says, St. Paul. Let us be clear: God does not need anything from us, but he wants us, because he created us, he loves us, and he deserves to be in relationship with us for eternity.

**Love never condemns. We cannot love a person and condemn him at the same tim**e. Love will correct and confront, but never condemn. Love will suffer with the beloved and for the beloved but will never give up the beloved. To what extent, will love continue to correct, to suffer? As long as love is love and as long as love lasts. **At times love will be tested and tried in the crucible of pain and pa**tience. And it is such moments that the quality of love is particularly tested. Love is thus made durable and precious by the qualities of patience and mercy. There may be very few or no **“rational reasons” to justify one**s’ actions and attitudes in persevering love. But surely there are reasons of the heart. These reasons as irrational, and persevering. **Patient love will be labelled as mad, insa**ne.

God loved and loves us with such a mad love. And Jesus is the fruit of such a tremendous love. **St., Pauls’ words in todays’ Second Reading, are breathtaking** *“ God loved us with so much love that he was generous with His mercy; when we were dead through our sins, He brought us to life in Christ*”. God revealed himself in Jesus. In Jesus, and especially in the suffering and death of Jesus, we get a glimpse of the extent and depth of Gods’ love. And so our fate depends on our attitudes towards Jesus who did not come to condemn but to save. If we adopt negative and critical attitudes towards Jesus, it is we who condemn ourselves. That’s why John says, “***The light came into the world, but people preferred darkness over l***ight”. The poison of sin infects our world. Quicker, easier. More seductive. Devil thrives in darkness. Everyone who does evil things hates the light.

Jesus is the light of the world. And if we turn our backs on Him, we are the losers. Our **ancestors preferred darkness** to light. In the past we too have done the same. But the most important point is: **What is our present attitude?**